

Applied Positive Psychology

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Week 9

Lecture 27: Positive Relationships: Theoretical Models and Interventions

I welcome you all to Module 9 of this course titled *Applied Positive Psychology*. Module 9 is about positive interpersonal relationships, and today is Lecture 2 of this module; overall, this is Lecture 24. Today's lecture is titled "Positive Relationships: Theoretical Models and Interventions." This lecture will focus on various models that explain relationships and their different aspects, and we will also discuss intervention strategies.

Before we begin today's lecture, let me give you a brief recap of the last lecture. The previous lecture was also part of this module, and in that lecture, we introduced the concept of positive relationships and social support. We also looked at the mechanisms of social support and well-being. Additionally, we explored other important factors relevant to positive relationships, such as capitalization, gratitude, and love.

In today's lecture, the key concepts we will focus on include theoretical models that explain what makes a good relationship. We will also look into practices and specific exercises that help cultivate positive relationships, which will form part of the intervention strategies.

So, let us begin with the theoretical models that discuss relationships and the factors that influence them, particularly positive relationships. The first theory we will be discussing is attachment theory. I will not go into too much detail about this theory, but we will focus on how it provides insight into positive relationships.

This attachment theory was originally developed by John Bowlby and later expanded by Ainsworth, one of Bowlby's colleagues. One of the important assumptions, or propositions, made in this theory is that early emotional bonds between children and their caregivers shape how individuals form relationships throughout their lives. One of the key insights that emerged from their experiments with children—and which became the foundation of this theory—is that the early emotional bond, meaning the nature of the emotional relationship between the child and the caregiver (such as parents or any primary caregiver), sets the stage for later adult relationships. It influences how relationships will be experienced in adulthood.

These initial childhood experiences with caregivers play a very important role in determining how adult relationships unfold. In the context of positive psychology, the key takeaway from this theory is that dependable and responsive caregiving fosters a sense of trust and security in children, which later generalizes to adult relationships.

So, the nature of the relationship and the type of caregiving provided to children in their early years play a significant role in shaping later-life relationships. Attachment theory distinguishes between secure and insecure attachment styles. Based on their interactions with caregivers,

children form specific attachment patterns—how they connect with their caregivers—and this becomes their attachment style, which often continues into adulthood.

This theory primarily describes two categories of attachment styles that children can form with their caregivers:

1. Secure attachment style, and
2. Insecure attachment style.

Now let us see what these two types of attachment styles are.

A secure attachment style, as the name suggests, is an emotionally open, comfortable, and trusting relationship that a child develops with their caregiver. It is characterized by comfort with intimacy and independence. The child has a very secure foundation and a very positive relationship with the caregiver. The child also feels a sense of independence. There is emotional openness, trust, and comfort in the relationship between the child and the caregiver. This is called a secure attachment style. It is a very healthy attachment style that sets a strong foundation for adult relationships and how they may play out in later years.

Another type is called the insecure attachment style.

There are different types of insecure attachment styles. This theory prominently discusses three types. The first is anxious–ambivalent attachment. Here, the relationship is more clingy, overly dependent, and characterized by a fear of abandonment. There is a sense of anxiety in the relationship between the child and the caregiver. The child becomes overly dependent on the caregiver, fearing that the caregiver may leave them, and so on. This is called an anxious–ambivalent attachment style.

For whatever reason, if the child forms this kind of relationship, it will come under an insecure attachment style. This is called anxious–ambivalent attachment.

Another attachment style that a child may develop is called avoidant attachment. Here, the child is mostly emotionally distant and avoids closeness or intimacy. The relationship is avoidant. The child is not securely connected to the caregiver; there is emotional distance, and the child avoids too much closeness or intimacy. There is a sense of detachment in the relationship.

The third category of insecure attachment style is called disorganized attachment. In this style, the relationship is confused, fearful, and erratic. There is no consistent pattern, unlike what we see in secure or anxious–ambivalent attachment. The child may behave unpredictably—sometimes fearful, sometimes confused. Disorganized attachment can also develop depending on the kind of caregiving the child receives.

So, all these possibilities exist: children may form secure attachment styles, insecure attachment styles, and different types of insecure attachment styles. Research shows that children who experience consistent care, a loving relationship, and a secure environment typically develop a secure attachment style.

Whenever caregiving is consistent—characterized by predictable, comforting, and trusting interactions—the child develops what is called a secure attachment style. As we discussed earlier, this style is characterized by confidence, trust, and the ability to balance independence and intimacy in relationships. There is both healthy intimacy and healthy independence.

In contrast, insecure attachment styles—such as anxious–ambivalent, avoidant, or disorganized—often result from inconsistent, neglectful, or abusive caregiving. When caregiving is inconsistent—sometimes very loving, sometimes abusive—or when children experience neglect or emotional unavailability, they may develop insecure attachment styles. This leads to confused, erratic, avoidant, or clingy patterns of attachment with the caregiver.

Now let us discuss some key points that emerge from this theory. A child's attachment style with their caregiver can play a very important role in adulthood. Adults with secure attachment styles tend to have more satisfying and healthier romantic relationships or other interpersonal relationships they form later in life. Research shows that the initial attachment style a child forms often becomes the foundation for adult relationship behaviors.

Generally, secure attachment in childhood leads to healthier and more satisfying adult relationships. Such individuals are more comfortable with intimacy, trust their partners, and handle conflicts constructively. These are some of the positive outcomes associated with secure attachment. They also report higher sexual satisfaction and are less likely to engage in infidelity. Overall, these are strong indicators of positive relationships. So, a secure attachment style tends to promote many positive relational behaviors in adulthood.

Individuals with an insecure attachment style may struggle with trust, intimacy, or dependency in relationships, often leading to lower relationship satisfaction and less healthy conflict resolution. Insecure attachment styles may create many problems—conflicts, lack of trust, lack of intimacy, or sometimes excessive dependency. These dynamics often appear in adults who developed insecure attachment styles in childhood.

Attachment style can play a very important role in adult romantic relationships. Research by Hazan and Shaver (1987) was among the first to apply attachment theory to adult romantic relationships. They found that securely attached adults generally have better relationship outcomes.

Many later studies also support this, showing that secure attachment is linked to higher relationship satisfaction, healthier conflict resolution styles, greater sexual satisfaction, and so on. These are some of the indicators associated with secure attachment in adulthood. Individuals with secure attachment tend to show many positive relationship qualities.

This long-term impact of early attachment, particularly childhood attachment, can be very significant. The attachment style a child forms with their caregiver can influence their adult relationships.

The connection, however, is not deterministic. It is not 100% certain that the attachment style formed in childhood will remain the same for the rest of a person's life. It can create a foundation and influence future relationships in a certain direction, but it does not necessarily remain unchanged throughout adulthood.

Some studies have shown that the correlation between childhood attachment and adult romantic relationships is significant but small to moderate. The correlation coefficient ranges from about

0.17 to 0.41. This suggests that while early experiences do matter, they do not entirely dictate future relationship outcomes. Individuals with insecure attachment styles can still develop healthy romantic relationships as adults.

People can change later in life. While early attachment patterns can influence adult behavior, they do not determine everything about adult attachment styles. These early patterns can play an important role, but they are not deterministic for the rest of life. People can and do change.

So, this was the first theory—attachment theory.

The next theory that talks about relationship aspects is called social exchange theory. It proposes that individuals evaluate relationships based on a cost–benefit analysis, similar to economic decision-making. Exchange theories examine the costs and benefits involved in relationships—how much cost is involved, what outcomes one receives, and so on. The idea is that a social exchange occurs between people when they form relationships.

There are various versions of social exchange theory, but one of the most prominent was developed by Thibaut and Kelley (1959). Their theory suggests that people seek to maximize rewards and minimize costs in relationships.

Rewards may include companionship, emotional support, and positive feelings. Costs may include stress, conflict, effort, or time commitments. People generally try to increase the rewards they receive—such as support, companionship, and positive emotions—and reduce the costs associated with the relationship, such as stress or effort.

Two key factors influence relationship decisions—whether people choose to enter or maintain a relationship. These are:

1. Comparison Level
2. Comparison Level for Alternatives

Let us see what these are. When we talk about the comparison level, it refers to an individual's assessment of whether the relationship meets their expectations based on past experiences and cultural norms. People generally evaluate their relationships by assessing whether the relationship they are forming meets certain expectations. Based on their past experiences or cultural norms, they develop certain standards and compare whether the current relationship meets those standards. This comparison can determine their level of satisfaction.

The second type of comparison is the comparison level for alternatives. Here, people consider whether there are other potential relationships that could offer greater rewards and fewer costs than their current one. They compare available alternatives to see if these options may provide better outcomes compared to their present relationship. People may engage in this type of evaluation in the context of social exchanges.

Although this framework provides useful insights into understanding relationship dynamics, the theory has also been criticized for not fully explaining why people remain committed to relationships even when better alternatives exist. One criticism is that, according to the theory's assumption, individuals seek better alternatives and may switch if something appears more rewarding. However, in real life, many relationships do not always follow this pattern in

numerous situations. And people say that it cannot explain why individuals remain committed to a relationship even when better alternatives may be available. This observation led Rusbult, in 1980, to develop the investment model of commitment, which adds a third critical factor: the investment size in a relationship. It is not just about cost–benefit analysis or evaluating alternatives—people also consider what they have invested in the relationship.

What is investment?

Investment includes tangible resources—such as money shared, possessions, and material contributions—as well as intangible resources, such as time, emotional energy, and shared memories.

These are all forms of investment. People invest in relationships not only through tangible means but also through intangible ones—time spent together, emotional involvement, meaningful experiences, and shared history. These investments influence whether people remain in a relationship. The size of the investment matters; people do not automatically move to a better alternative just because it exists.

According to Rusbult, the more individuals invest in a relationship, the more committed they become. Even if satisfaction declines or attractive alternatives appear, people may still remain committed because of the investments they have accumulated over time.

Research supports Rusbult’s model, showing that satisfaction, quality of alternatives, and investment size all significantly predict commitment. These factors are particularly strong in relational contexts such as romantic partnerships, compared to non-relational contexts like jobs.

Thus, the investment model helps explain why people stay in long-term relationships, such as marriages, even when better alternatives appear to be available.

However, there are certain criticisms of this model. For example, it cannot explain altruistic behavior. The social exchange framework struggles to account for prosocial or altruistic behaviors that lack clear personal benefits.

So, in many contexts, we see purely altruistic behavior where people do not expect anything in return. When people engage in altruistic behavior, they are not thinking, “*What am I going to get out of it?*” They are acting purely to help someone. Such behaviors cannot be explained by social exchange theory, because there is no expectation of reciprocal benefit.

Another problem with this theory is that most of the research supporting it is correlational in nature, making it difficult to establish causality. For example, it is unclear whether increased investment leads to greater commitment or whether greater commitment leads to higher investment. Correlational research cannot determine these causal directions.

There are also practical and ethical problems in conducting research on social exchange theories. Experimental studies that manipulate investment levels in real relationships are impractical and ethically problematic. It is not feasible or ethical to artificially manipulate how much someone invests in a relationship just to measure the effects. These issues limit the ability to conduct experimental research.

The third theory that we will talk about is called the balance theory of relationships. So this theory also talks about the dynamics of relationships. This theory was developed by Gottman and states that the stability and satisfaction of a relationship depend on achieving a healthy

balance between positive and negative interactions. Balance theory focuses on how individuals manage and balance positive and negative interactions, because every relationship contains both positive and negative elements. The key to a satisfying relationship depends on whether people are able to maintain this balance.

According to Gottman, disagreements and even anger are not inherently harmful or problematic in a relationship. What matters is how couples regulate and balance these interactions. How they manage conflict and restore positivity is the core idea behind this theory.

According to this model, there are regulated couples, who maintain a stable balance between positive and negative interactions. These regulated couples fall into three subtypes:

The first one is Validating couples:

These couples are calm, empathetic, and constructive in resolving conflicts. They try to understand each other's perspectives and work through disagreements openly. They acknowledge each other's feelings and validate each other's concerns. They are considered a type of regulated couple.

They generally understand one another. They are empathetic toward each other. They resolve conflicts; even though conflicts arise, they do not dwell on them. They try to resolve issues constructively, understand each other's perspectives, and whenever disagreements arise, they work through them and communicate openly. This is called validating couples.

The second type is called volatile couples. These couples experience emotional highs and lows and engage in passionate arguments. Despite the intensity of their interactions, they eventually resolve conflicts and maintain a stable balance. Volatile couples are emotionally very intense—there can be many highs and lows and passionate arguments—so there is a lot of emotional energy involved. However, they are generally able to maintain balance and stability in their relationship. This is why they are considered regulated couples.

The third type is called conflict-minimizing couples. These couples avoid conflict and strive to maintain optimism, even if it means ignoring their disagreements. While not ideal, their relationships remain stable and enduring. Such couples tend to avoid situations that may lead to conflict. They try to minimize disagreement, maintain optimism, and steer away from confrontation. This is why they are called conflict-minimizing couples.

So, there can be various types of regulated couples, but in all these cases, they are able to maintain balance and minimize destructive conflict.

Gottman proposed, through his research, the magic ratio of 5:1, which means five positive interactions for every one negative interaction. This ratio is a key predictor of relationship stability. When this ratio is maintained, the relationship tends to be balanced or stable. Couples who maintain this ratio tend to have lasting and satisfying relationships.

This is what this theory proposes. The other category of couples is called unregulated couples, meaning they are not able to maintain this ratio or balance. Unregulated couples lack balance between positive and negative interactions and often fail to meet the 5-to-1 ratio. They fall into two further categories. *Regulated* couples are those who can maintain balance, while *unregulated* couples cannot.

One category of unregulated couples is hostile couples. These couples exhibit open contempt and engage in repetitive, unresolved arguments. There are frequent conflicts, frequent disagreements, and continuous arguments, and they are unable to resolve them. This type of couple is referred to as hostile.

The second category is called hostile–detached couples. In these couples, one partner disengages from the conflict while the other continues to fight, leading to a pattern sometimes described as “guerrilla warfare,” with frequent unresolved disputes. In hostile couples, both partners may be fighting; in hostile–detached couples, one partner fights while the other withdraws. This also leads to unresolved conflicts because no real resolution takes place.

These unregulated relationships are more likely to end due to their inability to maintain a healthy balance of interaction. Such relationships generally cannot sustain themselves for a long time and are more likely to fail.

So, these are the three important theories that provide insights into the dynamics of relationships and how to maintain positive aspects within them.

Now, we will look at some practical exercises that come from these theories—exercises that help people understand what they should focus on and what kinds of activities they can do to maintain a positive relationship. The first exercise we will discuss comes from the last theory we covered, called rebalancing your relationship.

This exercise is based on Gottman’s balance theory. As we discussed, this theory states that stable and satisfying relationships typically maintain a ratio of 5 to 1—that is, *five positive interactions for every one negative interaction*. This 5:1 ratio indicates a balanced and healthy relationship.

This exercise helps individuals check whether they are able to maintain this balance.

Step 1: Reflect on the Past Week

It is helpful to focus on relatively recent interactions with the people involved—this may be your partner, a friend, or anyone you are evaluating your relationship with. Think about your interactions over the past week.

In any relationship, there will be both positive interactions and negative interactions. One can examine both types:

- Positive interactions could include compliments, shared laughter, acts of kindness, supportive gestures, enjoyable conversations, etc.
- Negative interactions could include arguments, criticism, misunderstandings, conflict, or tension.

So, the first step is to review what kinds of interactions—both positive and negative—occurred during the past week.

For positive interactions, one can focus on how often they experienced these positive aspects, such as appreciation, showing affection, and engaging in enjoyable activities together.

For negative interactions, one can look at how often conflicts, frustrations, or misunderstandings arose. You can take a window of one week and find out how often these

occurred—that is, the number of positive interactions and the number of negative interactions—just for the sake of this exercise.

Step 2: Calculate the Ratio

This does not mean you need to calculate everything using a calculator; it is simply about forming a broad idea of the ratio between positive and negative interactions. One can estimate the ratio of positive to negative interactions.

For example:

- If you had 15 positive interactions and 3 negative ones, your ratio is 5 to 1, which meets the benchmark and indicates a balanced relationship.
- If you had 10 positive interactions and 5 negative ones, the ratio is 2 to 1, which means the benchmark is not met, and improvement is needed.

Step 3: Identify Opportunities for Positive Interaction

If you find that there are too many conflicts or negative interactions in the relationship—and if the relationship is important to you—then you need to find opportunities to increase positive interactions. The positive side of the ratio must be strengthened.

If the ratio falls below the 5-to-1 benchmark, look for ways to increase positive interactions. Some ways to do this include:

- Expressing gratitude in the relationship—thanking your partner or friend for something they did, no matter how small. This strengthens positive interactions.
- Showing appreciation, such as acknowledging their efforts or expressing admiration.
- Engaging in enjoyable activities together, such as shared hobbies, meaningful conversations, or spending quality time.
- Offering emotional support, listening attentively, or helping them with something they care about.

These actions help increase the number of positive interactions and move the ratio closer to a healthy balance.

One can also increase compliments by acknowledging the strengths, efforts, or appearance of the other person, as this adds positivity to a relationship. One can plan fun activities—spending quality time together doing something you both enjoy—which also adds positive interactions. Showing physical affection, such as hugging, holding hands, or similar gestures, can increase positivity in relationships.

Listening attentively and showing genuine interest in the thoughts and feelings of the other person can also increase positivity. Sometimes surprising the other person with thoughtful actions—such as leaving a kind note or preparing their favorite meal—can contribute to this. Positive surprises like sitting together, laughing together, sharing stories, watching movies, and so on, also add positivity to a relationship.

So, if the ratio falls short, one can do any of these things—or a combination of these activities—to enhance the positive aspects or positive interactions in a relationship.

Step 4: Take Action

Whatever you identified in Step 3, you can now take action to increase those positive interactions. Step 3 was about identifying opportunities, and Step 4 is about acting on them.

You can write down two or three actions you can take to bring more positivity into the relationship. For example, some of the things we discussed can be applied directly in your interactions. Examples include:

- “I will compliment my friend or partner on his or her cooking tonight.”
- “I will plan a surprise visit.”
- “I will write a short appreciation note.”

These are simple actions that contribute to increasing the positive interactions in the relationship.

I will send a text during the day to say I am thinking of them, and so on. Whatever you have identified, you can actually take action and do it. That is step four.

Step 5: Monitoring and Adjusting

After implementing these changes, observe how they impact your relationships. Over time, aim to maintain the 5-to-1 ratio, at least in a broad sense, by consistently incorporating positive interactions and addressing negative ones constructively.

This monitoring and adjustment should be an ongoing process because relationships are not maintained for just one week—they are long-term and often lifelong. Therefore, continuous monitoring and adjustment are necessary.

The key takeaway from this exercise is that negative interactions are normal in every relationship, but balancing them with positivity is the key to a healthy, stable relationship. The question is: *Are you able to balance the negatives with positive interactions or not?* That is what matters most.

By intentionally increasing positive interactions, you can strengthen your bond and create more fulfilling connections. That is the core idea behind this exercise.

Second Exercise: Using Social Networks in a Healthy Way

This exercise also relates to relationships, but specifically to our interactions on social media and digital platforms. Many of our social interactions today occur online, so this exercise focuses on how we connect with people in digital spaces.

Research shows that people use social media extensively, and it significantly impacts their psychological well-being. Social media usage is extremely prominent in today’s world, and it strongly influences us emotionally.

How we interact with people on social media also impacts our well-being. Research shows that social media can sometimes have a detrimental impact, but this depends on how you use it. The key distinction lies in whether you engage in active or passive use. Some people use social

media very passively, while others use it actively, and this difference can determine the outcomes.

This exercise is about reflecting on your habits related to social media use.

Step 1: Reflect on Social Media Use

Ask yourself how you have been using social media. What is the nature of your usage?

Think about your social media activity over the past week. A one-week window is suggested so that you can easily recall your recent behavior and patterns.

Reflect on questions such as:

- Are you using it passively?
For example, spending time scrolling through posts, pictures, and videos without interacting with anyone.
- Are you using it actively?
For example, posting content, sending private messages, commenting, or engaging with others' posts.

These are the two primary ways people engage with social media—active and passive.

Passive use and active use both have different impacts.

Step 2: Assess the Impact

Passive use often leads to greater social comparison. You simply look at others' lives and compare them with your own. Most people show only the bright, positive parts of their lives on social media. This may not represent their life in totality, but when you passively scroll, it may seem like everyone else is happier or more successful than you.

Because people generally post only the best moments of their lives, passive scrolling often creates negative self-comparisons. You may start thinking your life is not good enough, or that others have it much better. This can result in feelings of inadequacy, envy, or loneliness, depending on what you see and how you interpret it.

Active use, on the other hand, tends to promote connection. Again, the impact depends on the nature of the activity, but generally, when you actively communicate—posting content, interacting with others, or sending messages—it promotes engagement and a sense of connection. This can enhance well-being, especially if the interactions are meaningful.

At least it is better than passive scrolling.

Step 3: Shift the Balance Toward Active Use

More meaningful, active interaction is better for well-being. So, if you find that you are engaging too much in passive use, it is better to shift toward active use. If you notice that you are spending too much time on social media overall, it is also better to reduce that usage.

If you find yourself engaging mostly in passive use, create a plan to incorporate more active interactions. Some suggestions include:

- Set intentional goals and decide how and when you will use social media.
For example:
 - “I will spend 10 minutes commenting on a friend’s post.”
 - “I will send a message to check in with a friend I haven’t talked to in a while.”

These kinds of actions help you reconnect with people you have not interacted with recently.

- Limit passive scrolling to reduce aimless browsing, which may not have any benefit and can even have negative effects.
- Use app trackers to monitor and reduce excessive usage.
- Engage meaningfully, which is crucial.

Active usage by itself may not be beneficial if your engagement is shallow. For example, if you are actively commenting but the comments are superficial or reactive, it may not contribute positively to well-being.

Now, let’s say you are commenting negatively or destructively and abusing people. In that case, the person is active, but it is not meaningful engagement. It creates more negativity. Many people are very active on social media, but their engagement carries a lot of negativity, which can be detrimental to themselves and others. So, when we speak about active engagement, we are referring to meaningful engagement.

Focus on quality interactions rather than quantity. Share updates about your life, respond thoughtfully to others’ posts, and use private messages to deepen connections. Curate your feed—follow accounts that inspire, educate, and uplift you, and unfollow those that trigger negative emotions.

So, active engagement has to be effective. Simply being active will not lead to benefits. How you are actively engaged—what kind of content you follow, what kind of posts you make, and how you interact—plays a very important role.

Social media is unavoidable in today’s world. It can also be a very good platform for connecting with people and enhancing relationships, including the positive aspects of those relationships.

Step 4: Take Action

Think about what problems you have observed in your social media habits and what actions you can take to reduce them. Write down two or three specific changes you need to incorporate to use social media more actively, intentionally, and meaningfully.

For example, you might say:

- “I’ll spend 15 minutes each day messaging friends instead of scrolling.”
- “I’ll post a photo or an update about something meaningful to me.”
- “I’ll join a group or community that aligns with my interests.”

You can join many groups or communities. If you are interested in certain hobbies or activities, you can find like-minded people on social media, connect with them, and explore your interests. These actions can enhance both your quality of life and your relationships.

Again, one must monitor this continuously. Doing it for just one week will not make any lasting impact.

To make an impact on one's life, one has to continuously monitor and adjust accordingly. Track how these changes are affecting you—your mood, emotions, and overall well-being. If you notice positive changes in your mood and well-being, keep monitoring and adjust as needed. Over time, aim to maintain a healthy balance between active and passive usage, prioritizing interactions that foster connection and positivity.

So, the key takeaway is that social media can either enhance or harm your well-being depending on how you use it. That is very important. Shifting from too much passivity to more active, healthy engagement can build stronger connections and improve psychological health as well.

The Third Exercise: Making Connections (Based on Fredrickson's Love 2.0)

This last exercise focuses on relationships from the perspective of Barbara Fredrickson's Love 2.0. We have already discussed Fredrickson's theory of positive emotions in earlier modules, and this exercise is based on her ideas.

According to Fredrickson's Love 2.0 perspective, love is not limited to romantic relationships or close friendships. It can be experienced in brief positive moments of connection with anyone, even strangers. In this view, love is defined as micro-moments of positive resonance—broadening the idea beyond traditional romantic love.

Here, she describes love in a broader sense as positive connections with anyone, where even brief interactions can create shared positivity. This positivity can flow from one individual to another.

This is what she defines as love. These moments—characterized by shared positivity and synchrony—can boost well-being by releasing oxytocin, a neuropeptide linked to bonding and happiness. The idea is that these experiences of love or positive connections with other people have a physiological impact, as they release hormones that enhance mood and positivity.

This exercise is based on that idea. One can think about various connection activities. Take a moment to jot down three or four simple ways you can create positive moments or connections with others in the coming week. Again, a one-week period is suggested to make it recent and easy to reflect on. These do not need to be grand gestures; small, genuine interactions can be just as powerful.

Some examples include:

- Smiling and saying hello: Greet a stranger or co-worker with a warm smile or a friendly wave.
These small gestures create positive interactions and help build connections.
- Giving compliments: Acknowledge someone's effort, appearance, or personality with a kind word.
Compliments build positive emotions in relationships.
- Sharing a laugh: Make a light-hearted joke or comment to brighten someone's day.

- Expressing gratitude: Thank someone for something they have done, no matter how small.
- Offering help: Assist someone with a task or hold the door open for them.

These tiny actions create micro-moments of connection, which Fredrickson considers moments of “love” in the Love 2.0 framework.

These kinds of small gestures contribute to the idea of creating positive connections. You can choose one action to try this week. If you find it helpful, you can choose a different one for the next week, and so on. Select one of your ideas and commit to trying it during the week.

For example:

- “I will smile and say hello to the barista at my favorite coffee shop.”
- “I will compliment my co-worker on their new haircut.”
- “I will thank my partner for making dinner last week.”

Everyone has different situations in their lives, so you can choose something that fits your own context and decide, “*This week, I will do this.*”

Reflect on the Experience

After you try the action, take a moment to reflect:

- Did you feel a sense of connection or synchrony with the other person?
- How did the interaction make you feel?
- Did you notice any changes in your mood or energy levels?
- Did it enhance positivity in your relationship?

If you find it meaningful or positive, you can continue practicing it in the coming weeks.

Build on the Momentum

If something feels uplifting, consider incorporating more of these small moments of connection into your daily routine. Over time, these moments can add up and foster a greater sense of belonging and well-being. These small gestures may seem insignificant, but when combined over time, they can create substantial positivity in one’s life.

Key Takeaway

In Fredrickson’s view, love is about creating micro-moments of connection in our daily lives. These brief positive interactions, when accumulated, can significantly enhance well-being.

It is not about grand events or deep connections with specific individuals only. By intentionally engaging in small positive interactions, you can cultivate a sense of love and synchrony in your everyday life experiences. This can enhance both your well-being and the well-being of the people around you, because these actions not only benefit you but also provide many benefits to others.

These are the key takeaways from this exercise. These simple practical exercises can be reflected upon, implemented, monitored, and adjusted over time. All three exercises can be very helpful in improving positive aspects or interactions in one's relationships on a daily basis.

So, these are some of the concepts and practices related to positive relationships. With this, I end here. Thank you.